

DESK NOTES

CATHOLIC COUNCIL FOR THE SPANISH SPEAKING

B.C.S.S. Regional Office
409 Oppenheimer Bldg.
San Antonio 5, Texas

MEMORANDUM

November 23, 1957

TO: Priests working with migrants and braceros.

RE: Workshop in San Antonio

On October 22 some fifteen priests in the Archdiocese of San Antonio met at the Hilton Hotel where a workshop was sponsored by the Regional Office of the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish Speaking. The purpose of this workshop was to give these priests an opportunity of reporting on the work that they had done for the migrants and braceros with the hope that an exchange of ideas would benefit not only those attending the workshop but hundreds of other priests as well throughout the country who find themselves in similar circumstances.

Perhaps these reports will help you in the work that you are doing. We realize that every locale is different and perhaps the suggestions in these reports are not applicable to your needs. At any rate, reading these reports will convince you that our priests are concerned about this problem of caring for our migrants and braceros and are definitely doing something about it.

Rev. William D. O'Connor, O.M.I.
Executive Secretary

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO ---- OCTOBER 22, 1957

Our Lady of Refuge Church
Box 429
Eagle Pass, Texas

RESUME OF REPORT ON BRACERO SITUATION IN EAGLE PASS.

In Eagle Pass the situation is somewhat different from other points. We have a Reception Center where the braceros come to the United States from Mexico. They arrive, are processed and continue on to the places where they are going to work.

We began our program in late September of 1956. Having contacted the officials of the Bracero Center we began visiting during the hours when they were arriving. After some experimenting we found that the best time to go was in the early morning. The men would arrive during the night from Monterrey. They would be passed through the different steps of medical examination, X-ray, spraying with insecticide, bathing, examination of papers, then they lined up for breakfast at about 5:30 to 5:45 in the morning.

Our people gathered at the church at six when those who desired received Communion. Then we left the church to drive the eleven miles to the Center. Arriving about six thirty A.M. the parishioners began mixing with the men as they came out of breakfast. They distributed whatever articles we were able to scrape together - rosaries, medals, estampitas, etc., and everybody got a copy of the attached sheet welcoming them to the United States and telling them a few facts about Catholics in the United States.

Meanwhile the priest would be getting his loud speaker ready up on the catwalk that ran about fifteen feet up in the air along the side wall of the hangar. At the sound of his voice the men would gather below and the priest gave them about 20 to 30 minutes of informal talk telling them in general to be good workers, good family men, good Catholics and good representatives of their homeland, Mexico.

Since it was impossible for the priest to go every day, sometimes the talk was given by means of a tape recorder. Then the priest would begin the rosary and all the men knelt down on the concrete slab and answered the rosary and joined in the singing of the hymns.

After a few invocations and VIVAs - Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe, etc. the parishioners and priest returned to Eagle Pass.

This program went on from late September until almost the end of November when the cold weather up north curtailed the activities of the bracero and the number dwindled to nothing.

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We went about five days a week and the number of parishioners never was less than twelve and the top number would probably be thirty-five on any given day.

This summer we did not get started when we should have. It is more difficult to get people to work during the summer - vacations, visiting relatives, etc., so that we missed thousands of the braceros as they entered.

Another factor causing delay in our program - they have built a new Center which is right near the bridge in Eagle Pass. During the changeover, and toward the end of the construction, etc. the operation of receiving the braceros was very irregular.

Again at the end of September our people began going to receive the braceros. Now they come straggling in all through the night at all hours. By trial and experience our people have found that the best time to go is from eight until twelve in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon, if there are still men on hand. They leave on the trucks as soon as they are contracted. There is no longer any large central hall where it is possible to give them a talk. The people go among them and distribute literature, medals, etc.

I think that our people are wonderful in doing this work. It is a program that has no end until the end of the entire bracero movement, and they do not see any of the good results of their work aside from the happiness they see in the braceros' faces to be met by Catholics.

At present the program is being directed by Mrs. Raul Montemayor, Archdiocesan Chairman for Interamerican Activities, under the guidance of Father Edward Bastien, O.M.I.

There is a bookmobile on the scene every day. Sponsored by some Protestant sect they spread out Protestant literature among the braceros. Every day they are there and seem to have money to keep giving away books.

Our people go five days a week. The number of braceros varies between 400 to about 1,500 with occasional large groups of over two thousand.

REV. WILLIAM NASH, O.M.I.

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO ----- OCTOBER 22, 1957

Our Lady of Sorrows Church
Victoria, Texas

INTRODUCTION: The missionary and organized care for the braceros and migrants should indeed be close to the heart of every priest. Most of us know that several hundred thousand of them continually move from one place to another seeking their humble livelihood. In this unpretentious report I hope to demonstrate to our Workshop not only what you already know, namely, that the charity of Christ and the salvation of souls urge us to be extremely kind toward both the braceros and the migrants, but to reveal how active our Protestant friends are in using every means possible to attract them and, whenever possible, to induce them to apostatize from the true Faith. Certainly we priests, divinely appointed pastors of souls, cannot ignore the plight of this deserving flock in the vineyard of Our Lord.

PROGRAM: The cotton-pickers in our Victoria area started coming into prominence about the middle of August and by the middle of September the greater portion of them left. These Mexican migrants were from various parts of Texas. They gave as their starting point such places as San Antonio, Waco, New Braunfels, Pharr, Donna, Alice, Corpus Christi, Weslaco, San Juan, Brownsville, Harlingen, McAllen and other places. No braceros or nationals were seen in this area.

The cotton-pickers traveled in what they themselves termed "campos" or camps. That is to say, several families would band together and work as a group in farms large enough for the camps. Some of these "campos" or groups could pick an entire cotton field in one day. Most of these workers brought along their own small oil stoves to cook their food out in the open.

Our parish committee for the migrants began to organize well before the cotton-picking season started. We called this group the "Welcome Committee" consisting of twenty-five lay volunteers from the Third Order of the Most Holy Trinity, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Legion of Mary and the Altar Society.

At a special meeting these lay workers were instructed to contact the driver or leader of all out-of-town trucks. It was not hard to identify these out-of-town trucks which were overloaded with workers, men and women, and a whole flock of niños. These trucks were usually parked in and around the Plaza, along the stores, movies and cantinas.

Our lay workers would open the door, so to speak, with a friendly "Bienvenidos Amigos" and then the migrants were asked "Are you from out-of-town and working in the cotton fields?" and "Are you a Catholic?" If both questions were answered in the affirmative, the lay workers would explain to the migrants that they were representing the Catholic Church and wanted to give them spiritual and material assistance.

Our lay workers would explain to these migrants where the City Park was, places for restrooms, shower facilities, tables, barbecue grills, shade trees under which they could park or get a good siesta. Perhaps the best information, from the material point of view, was to inform them exactly where the State Employment Office was located. In this way they could find out just where some farms needed pickers.

A Welcome Card was given to the one who appeared to be the leader or father in each group. This particular card had printed information as to the location, and name of the nearest Catholic Church. Also listed on the card were such necessary data as the hours of Masses on Sunday, time for Confessions, Baptisms and Doctrina Cristiana. Holy pictures, rosaries, medals, prayers and crucifixes were given to all the children. Prayer cards and leaflets (such as Hoja Semanal del Buen Pastor) were distributed to the adults. Catechisms, Novena prayers, pictures of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of San Juan "go big" among the migrants. The welcome cards were given to the drivers of the trucks and cars to place on the windshield of their vehicles. Many of these poor people offered to pay for this "santitos" but were told that such were not for sale. They were informed that these religious articles were given solely as souvenirs from the city's Catholic Church.

Our parish committee contacted about 400 trucks and cars. Over 1,500 medals, rosaries and crucifixes were given away as well as over 500 holy cards with prayers on the reverse side. Fifty dollars were given by the Daughters of Mary of Our Lady of Sorrows Church and by the St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Mary's Church. This defrayed the cost of the religious articles. The welcome cards were printed gratuitously.

Owing to the fact that migrants and braceros are transients in a community (I am speaking of the Gulf area), it is almost impossible to measure the concrete results of our help to them. This is especially true as regards any catechetical program that might have been carried out. For these Migrants are here today and gone tomorrow. The only time our lay workers could approach these migrants was on Saturday afternoons when they came to the Plaza in order to buy things, to relax, to get a cold raspa and take in a movie. We had fourteen of our ladies who volunteered to give Christian Doctrine classes in the parish hall from 9:00 until 11:30. But despite our good will and invitation we had no success in this matter. The ladies waited patiently, but no children came for the Doctrina. I suppose the parents were afraid the truck drivers would leave them behind and therefore did not want to take the risk in coming. Another reason was that most of these groups did not stay in the community longer than one week. Moreover, a large number of families carried many infants, some of them ill, and therefore simply came to town to buy provisions. After doing so they went back to the farms.

On the other hand, some noticeably good results were accomplished. Because of well directed propaganda by our lay workers a good number of cotton pickers came to Mass on Sunday. Some children received Holy Communion and four

large niños were baptized. There is no question that the kindness of these ladies toward the migrants will produce some lasting effects for I am sure that migrants will not forget what was done for them. They indeed will remember that their fellow Catholics welcomed them in a strange place, away from their homes. Perhaps they will not forget the warnings against those supposed friends, members of the various Protestant sects who try to win them over to their religion.

Miss Minnie Molina, the Chairman of the Committee, was truly a driving force in this apostolic work. She gave reports on 104 contacts with the migrants, telling us that the reaction and the gratitude of these deserving people was most evident. A great number of the migrants from the Valley area showed signs that their pastors had warned them of endangering their Faith by listening to non-Catholic revival meetings. So much was this noticed that even our own lay workers had to prove that they were Catholics before the migrant would listen. Some of them even boasted of their Faith when asked what their religious affiliation was. Upon being told that there were in town tents with non-Catholics in them waiting to greet them, one truck driver humorously said "My religion does not come in tents'."

PROTESTANT ACTIVITIES: Last year the United Protestant Churches announced they would pick up the children of cotton pickers and take them to a colored Baptist Church. Here while their parents worked they would feed them or give them refreshments along with the usual Bible classes. This was to be done by Anglo-American and colored women. I understand that this program was unsuccessful.

This year the Victoria Council of Church Women, in cooperation with the Texas Migrant Ministry, set up two tents and kept them in operation for four Saturdays. One of them was pitched at the City Hall square and another at the City Park. Colored and Anglo-American women were to work among the migrants. They even went so far as to employ a Spanish-speaking Protestant. These tents provided comic books, Protestant literature, ice water, soap, toys and other useful articles. The sign on the tent did not indicate anything about religion. It only showed that the personnel was to aid the migrant worker in any of his problems and to give out information.

One Catholic woman, with a child in her arms, said to a lay worker that she went into one of these tents for a drink of water and was asked if she were a Catholic. When she said that she was she was told that no water was given to Catholics.

One of our lay workers made this comment: "Whether the Welcome Card information was used or not, the services attended or not, the migrants who passed through this area were reminded to keep their Faith alive and they went into the other towns well supplied with prayers, medals and holy pictures. Those who were given medals or crucifixes pinned them on their

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person, on their children or their trucks. "They were most courteous to me" this worker reported.

OBSERVATION: Some local Latin Americans seemed to resent the presence of the migrants in their midst. Nevertheless, I feel that a kind word from the pulpit did more good to bring about a better understanding of their fellow-Catholic, the migrant who because of economic conditions and nomadic existence, is forced to live as he does. Consequently, if we Catholics do not help these poor migrants with the riches of our Faith, someone else, poor in doctrine and creed, will extend to them their open arms.

Rev. Hyacinth Rosati, O.S.S.T.

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO --- OCTOBER 22, 1957

St. John Bosco Church
P. O. Box 620
Vanderbilt, Texas

Following is a report on the work done for the migrant workers in St. John Bosco Parish during the season just passed:

The migrant workers (20 - 25 families) stayed in the community no longer than three weeks, partly because they were eager to make easy money elsewhere and partly because much of the cotton was picked by machines.

In Vanderbilt and La Salle (Jackson County) the parish societies, namely, the Holy Name, the Altar Society, the Confraternity and the CYO, took the responsibility of distributing the Mass and Confession schedules to all the migrants in the parish. Some of the schedules were the "ready made" type supplied by the Councils of Catholic Women. Most of them were prepared by the Pastor. These were printed in English and Spanish.

All the parishioners were asked to cooperate in publicizing the Church schedules by distributing these schedules which were attached to the Sunday Bulletins.

There were no extra Masses or Devotions for the migrants, but all were well informed and made to feel welcome.

On weekends the workers were traveling or just passing the time in the bigger towns in Victoria and Jackson Counties. As a result very few went to Mass in St. John Bosco Church, Vanderbilt, or in St. Theresa Church, LaSalle.

The Protestants made little effort even to contact the migrant workers, apparently because the workers were constantly on the move.

Rev. Edward C. Bartsch, Pastor

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO ----- OCTOBER 22, 1957

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
P. O. Box 296
Carrizo Springs, Texas

The Texas Employment Commission estimates that there are about 900 braceros in the Dimmit County area. The Farm Bureau at Carrizo Springs says they have around 300 and it must be noted that these latter are included in the Texas Employment Commission's estimate.

From personal questioning I can account for only 270 braceros. The Carrizo Springs area is close to the Border - 40 miles from Piedras Negras and 80 from Laredo or Nuevo Laredo. Since many are off Saturday afternoon and Sunday, it is easy for them to cross the border and visit family or relatives in border towns. Two have told me they moved their families from Michoacan to Piedras Negras; others stay in town over Saturday night. My ushers tell me they notice only about 25 - never more - at Sunday Masses whom they consider braceros. All the owners and employers were asked the question, "If the braceros wish to go to town on Sunday morning to go to religious services, would you furnish them the transportation?" All, even Protestants, answered "yes." Some said they take them to town Saturdays and leave them there until Sunday night. If they average one out of five at Mass are they any worse than residents? They have been saturated with circulars announcing the time schedule, etc. Lay workers, mostly from the societies are very helpful in giving away leaflets, announcements or literature; but they are very reluctant to get information or reports. The theatre manager and the storekeepers where the braceros shop are good ways to circularize.

Proselytizers: The Protestants are giving out literature too. I only found one who tries to convert them to being Seventh Day Adventists. Some workers have succumbed; others just quit and return to Mexico.

Welfare: The bracero is protected by insurance and contracts; and so far I have found the owners and managers to take good care of the sick and their needs. I have seen some wonderful examples of corporal works of mercy.

Migrants: Migrants coming here are very few. I only found them here in February and March and they usually present us with one welfare case after another. I only ran across four families. They stayed with relatives or rented. Migrants leaving here are numerous, and I don't believe anyone will ever be able to find out how many. Anyway at the peak of the exodus over half of the congregation is absent. A gloom just spreads over the town until they come back. When they come back everyone is busy and happy again. In order to find out what happens to the workers when they get back we came up with the following survey: of seven families forty-two persons went North. While

twenty-seven of these worked in the North only nine will be workers at home; the others become housewives again or school children. Two of the forty-two stayed North permanently.

Our ordinary parish work is dealing with parishioners who must migrate half a year for a living. Nearly every other person has to do it. The bracero who migrates here absorbs into the population. Some farmers even rent houses in town to quarter them. Every single one has the opportunity of fulfilling his religious obligations without any great inconvenience. Very few in Dimmit County are over ten miles from Church. Saying Mass or Rosary on a ranch might be more convenient but is it needed? Stress contact work, personal contact and through societies; even just telling them the schedule of Masses makes them feel wanted.

Rev. John Schwider, O.M.I.

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO OCTOBER 22, 1957

Our Lady of the Gulf Church
Oblate Fathers
Port Lavaca, Texas

This report that I am going to make on the migrant workers in Port Lavaca, Texas and Calhoun County I have compiled from existing information and reports made by Rev. Philip Byron who was Pastor at that time.

The report will be made according to questions asked by His Excellency the Archbishop and Fathers William O'Connor and Joseph Crosthwait.

1. Within the limits of your parish how many braceros do you have?
According to the information that I could gather, there were no braceros in Calhoun County in the past year.

2. Within the limits of your parish how many migrants were there?
Over 3,000 migrants in the Port Lavaca area were contacted during the month of July and the first two weeks in August. Ninety percent of the migrants came from parishes under the care of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It was a constant source of surprise to people to learn that the seminarians knew their pastors and assistants. The majority of the workers came from the Rio Grande Valley and said that they were forced to seek work away from their homes because they had been overrun by the bracero invasion.

3. Who did this work, how many and what organizations participated?
Under the direction of Father Philip Byron, O.M.I. the Scholastic Brothers of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and some lay workers formed the organization of this work. Due to the late planting because of the heavy spring rains, the cotton was late this year and the Scholastic Brothers managed to visit the first six hundred Catholic workers who entered Calhoun County. The Brothers began calling on approximately fifty farmers of the County. The purpose of these visits was to seek the owners' permission to enter their property and speak with their workers during the early hours of the evening. Although the majority of the farmers were non-Catholics the Brothers were well received and the owners not only posed no objections but some even offered their services if they be needed.

4. Program The program offered was attendance at Mass, recitation of the rosary, instructions and distribution of Catholic literature and the blessing of their cars and trucks. When the migrants began their arrival during the second week of August the Oblate seminarians visited with each family, took the census, the results of which will be sent to the respective pastors, and then gathered the whole camp for the recitation of the Rosary and the singing of alabanzas.

The people were then reminded of their Sunday obligation to attend Mass and they were given a schedule of the Masses in Port Lavaca and Seadrift.

They were encouraged to continue the practice of the family Rosary, especially while out on "Las Piscas". Before departing the Scholastics would distribute Catechisms called the "Family Catechism" which is printed in comic book form, and also back issues of the "Treasure Chest."

From all appearances the people seemed to appreciate the visits which lasted about an hour. During this time the Scholastic Brothers, numbering about fourteen, visited twenty-five camps. Each Brother averaged six visits and traveled about twenty-five miles an evening from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. On their return they would spend an hour making a report to Rev. Philip Byron, discussing their visits and problems. The transportation was furnished by some of the parishioners and on some occasions even the young men of the parish accompanied the Brothers.

On Sunday, August 18, Father Byron, with the aid of his assistants, Fathers William Morrissey and John McGrath who are in charge of the surrounding missions, blessed the cars and trucks of the migrants after Masses in Port Lavaca and Seadrift.

On Saturday the migrants would come to town and the Seminarians met the workers as they got out of their trucks and cars at the meat markets and grocery stores. The people immediately recognized the seminarians who had visited them and seemed most appreciative of this added consideration and kindness. This was also the occasion for contacting some of the families for the first time and passing out Catholic literature.

Part of the problem of getting the people to Sunday Mass was solved by contacting the individual truck drivers. The migrants are entirely dependent on their driver. If he takes them to church, they go. If not they have to remain home. The Brothers made it a point to talk with each trucker a few minutes and ask him to bring the families to Mass. This pleased the people a great deal. The seminarians were also present at each Mass to welcome the migrants. This helped to do away with much of the timidity and uneasiness naturally felt by a person in a strange location.

5. Protestant Activity. The seminarians encountered a group of Protestants running a Welfare Center in Port Lavaca called "Casa de Amigos." They claimed to be a non-sectarian group dedicated to the teaching of art and handicraft. They likewise had an entertainment program for the migrants. When this approach as non-sectarian failed they went as far as to declare themselves Catholics in order to get the migrant children to attend their classes. It is to the credit of the migrants that in spite of an attractive program of movies, games and refreshments relatively few approached the Center.

Conclusion: From this report you can gather that Father Philip Byron did very good work in this field of migrant workers and he did as much as he could possibly do considering all the handicaps and problems he had already been confronted with in the work of his parish. At the present time a permanent organization is being set up on the basis of the block captain system of the whole town of Port Lavaca and the rural area will be developed. As far as possible we are putting Spanish-speaking men in charge of the Spanish-speaking people and we hope to do some definite work with the hope of some definite results in the future.

Rev. Vincent Verderame, O.M.I.

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO --- OCTOBER 22, 1957

Sacred Heart Church
418 Ft. Clark--Box 774
Uvalde, Texas

This report will deal only with the braceros or Mexican nationals as found in the County of Uvalde. In comparison with the farming areas of Texas there are relatively few braceros that work in Uvalde County, which is predominantly grazing land. In the immediate area around the City of Uvalde there are some farms and the latest report on the number of braceros is 200.

The first project in working with and for the Mexican nationals was to visit the different camps in order to let them know that the priest spoke Spanish and to invite them to religious services. The next visit consisted in giving the rosary, singing of alabanzas by a choir of girls accompanied by the Sister Catechists. After rosary medals and rosaries were distributed.

The purpose of the foregoing visits was mainly to gain their confidence. After this our St. Vincent de Paul Society took over and began regular visits to the camps. Different Catholic men provided trucks and on Sunday mornings they went to the camps to bring the braceros to Mass.

On one occasion arrangements were made and I went with two men from the parish to hear their confessions in the camps. This was not successful.

Many of the braceros have small radios and a radio program in Spanish that we sponsored during the summer months was quite successful.

I personally and the men of the parish invited them to a Spanish mission that ended last Sunday. They came quite well considering the fact that they work late and had to come on foot.

The average bracero is serious and determined to help his family in Mexico. Very little money is spent on vices. They send an average of \$50 monthly back to Mexico to their families.

I have found that the braceros are well treated. On one large farm a cement block house is provided and meals, ample and balanced, are prepared at a cost of seventy-five cents daily. Where the number of workers is small they prepare their own meals. I feel quite sure that the housing provided is much better than the bracero has at home.

My experience is that the farmers treat the workers well. In fact, they often go out of their way to do favors for them. Hospitalization is provided for injured or sick workers with no distinction being made in the service they receive.

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The Protestant sects are definitely working with the braceros but without much success. The braceros have a fear and distrust for the ministers and on my first visit they remained in their quarters until they found out I was a Catholic priest. They were afraid I was a minister.

Rev. Joseph Buckley, O.M.I.

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO ---- OCTOBER 22, 1957

St. Robert Bellarmine Church
El Campo, Texas

Due to the fact that I have just recently been appointed to this Parish and because of my lack of experience with relation to apostolate work among the migratory workers, I was not able to cooperate in making a more elaborate program for religious activities beneficial to them.

Following is a brief account of the things that took place at St. Robert Bellarmine Parish, El Campo, during the cotton season.

I. PIETY

First of all 1,000 leaflets were distributed which contained the names and addresses of Catholic Churches in El Campo and the time schedule of Sunday Masses. Through these leaflets we urged them to attend Mass and defend their Faith by rejecting all Protestant propaganda offered them.

As a result of the distribution of leaflets, 200 more than the usual attendance number attended Mass on Sundays. During three Saturdays we took a group of boys to the public park and they played popular music and sang songs, the purpose being to get everybody together. Next the Priest led the group in reciting the Rosary and at the end of each decade well known hymns were sung in Spanish. After praying the Rosary the Priest gave them a brief sermon. Young ladies, members of the Sodality of Our Lady, helped distribute leaflets and were in charge of religious hymns sung during the Rosary.

During several weeks the Priest went alone to visit different families and advised them concerning their religious and moral side of life. Daily visits to the hospital made by the Priests also served well in advising and instructing them.

Among the groups visited we found several couples not married by the Church; and children who had not been baptized. In several cases their prejudices against Baptism such as "not having sponsors available", were overcome; and twenty-two children received the Sacrament. Some of the couples were willing to receive instructions and be married by the Church but due to their brief stay in our city, time was not sufficient to allow all legal preparations to be made. We urged them to do this upon their return to their parishes.

II. INSTRUCTION

In order to instruct the people two methods suitable to the circumstances were used. (a) Lessons in Catechism were given to individual persons and groups by the Priests and laymen in El Campo and surrounding communities.

(b) Radio talks were planned and given over the local Radio Station. Through these radio talks we were able to reach a greater number of Latin-Americans as the majority of them listen to the radio and we are certain those traveling on the highways as they came into El Campo also heard our talks. Although most of the migratory workers have left our city, our radio talks have continued for the benefit of the local people.

III. COOPERATION OF LAYMEN

Our report on this subject is brief, perhaps because all our parishioners are busy at their jobs, some are timid, and others were not willing to help. As mentioned before, members of the Sodality of Our Lady cooperated in singing during Rosary in the public park. Members of the Holy Name and Catholic Women Societies helped by inviting families to attend Mass and giving religious instruction to some.

IV. ACTS OF CHARITY

There were no material acts of charity made because most of our parishioners are poor and are not acquainted with rich people from whom to ask cooperation.

V. PROTESTANT ACTIVITIES

- (a) Local newspapers reported that all Protestant Churches were united in planning a beneficial program for the migratory workers.
- (b) At the public park religious services were held such as giving sermons and hymn singing.
- (c) Movies on religion were shown.
- (d) Literature was distributed and campaigns to sell Bibles were made.
- (e) All during cotton season a group of missionaries visited from house to house.
- (f) They donated blood to the local hospital.
- (g) They visited the hospital patients diligently.

RESULTS OF PROTESTANT ACTIVITIES

- (a) Their sermons did not hold interest among the people.
- (b) The majority were Catholics (with the exception of two or three families) and they did not take part in Protestant activities and rejected literature distributed.
- (c) Our parishioners did not allow Protestant missionaries to enter their homes.

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- (d) In some cases migratory workers were impressed by material help given by Protestants and commented that Catholics did not offer such things. We suppose their purpose in making these acts of charity through material gifts was a strategic attack of kindness.

VI. PROBLEMS

- (a) Several families did not attend Mass because their truck driver did not want to drive them to church.
- (b) Itinerant peddlers had for sale religious books, novels, books of magic, etc., but the latter were not sold.
- (c) Sanitary conditions of board and lodging places were very bad. In some cases more than 20 persons were obligated to spend the night at places where only ten would have been comfortable. These conditions were apparent in Danevang.
- (d) The nomadic life of these people makes apostolate work among them difficult.

VII. SUGGESTIONS.

- (a) House to house apostolate.
- (b) To make the well instructed laymen help us in this house to house apostolate.
- (c) We should have an intelligent and sacerdotal comprehension and a patience as great as the ocean. They are souls redeemed with the blood of our Lord and we are missionaries in our rural parishes.

Father Marques.

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO ---- OCTOBER 22, 1957

St. Philip's Church
304 W. Church St.
El Campo, Texas (Msgr. Julius A. Petru)

Work among the migrant workers during the cotton picking season is carried out by the Knights of Columbus and this is in addition to the work done by St. Robert's Parish. 1,500 handbills were printed by the Knights of Columbus and were distributed by the two parishes in stores, filling stations, the City Park and elsewhere. These handbills, both in Spanish and English, gave the time of the Masses in the two churches, and an admonition, "Beware of false prophets." These were also distributed to the farmers after Masses on Sunday and many told me personally that they encourage their workers to attend Mass on Sunday.

Catholic Daughters conducted rummage sales on four consecutive Saturdays. It is good to mention that articles were sold at a very nominal price because the main purpose was not a question of money making project, but an opportunity or good reason to be with the Spanish people. On two successive Saturdays the Catholic Daughters distributed 500 copies of the La Voz and the priests gave out 1,000 holy cards on Our Lady of Guadalupe to the little children. These proved to be very popular. The Daughters also collected all the Catholic magazines, Treasure Chests and other Catholic literature that could be found and let the little children as well as the old folks take these for reading. Some of the ladies also distributed medals and Sacred Heart badges; the supply was gone in no time.

The work of the Protestants was not noticeable to any great extent. The Assembly of God had a preacher on the grounds but only a few gave ear to his words.

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO ----OCTOBER 22, 1957

ST. AGNES CHURCH
EDNA, TEXAS

Our problem in Edna is different in many ways from some of the others. Our workers are all Texas Migrants. They have been very good in accepting the help that was offered by our ladies and our laymen and our ladies also mention that the workers were very reluctant to accept literature from them at first until they knew for sure that the literature was Catholic, and we were very happy about this.

We have no camps in our area. In Edna there is a County shed that has been built for that purpose but it is never used. There are no big growers within the limits of our parish. They come to Edna on the weekends. We have only a few cotton farmers within our parish. The rest are rice farmers. We have the Sunday Spanish sermon all year long and on Saturdays the ladies of the Guadalupana Society go about the town square visiting with them and handing out the Catholic literature, in particular, the little welcome card with the prayers, time of Masses, Confessions, etc. I try to run down to the square on Saturdays myself. The reaction was always good and response on Sunday mornings was noticed. Ever so often there would be a truck with some of the migrant workers but there was certainly no big increase at Sunday Mass. Socially we ran into great difficulty trying to offer something to them. We tried showing Spanish movies but the response was very poor because it was hard to find a time and place that they would come to. I don't think they particularly care to come to the parish hall because it is not near the public square.

The migrants this year were few in number, comparatively speaking, because the crops were so short and the migrants we talked to were so indefinite about whether they would be there the next morning or not.

We attempted to set up a Welcome Center and I would like to have some suggestions as to whether that is good or not. We didn't notice any Protestant activity in Edna at all. The local Baptist Church in Edna is very small.

REV. BALTASAR JANACEK

WORKSHOP FOR PRIESTS WORKING WITH BRACEROS AND MIGRANTS IN
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SACRED HEART CHURCH
CRYSTAL CITY, TEX.

We have about 4,000 migrants during the year. They begin to leave in March and don't come back until December. All we can do for them is to bless their cars and trucks before they leave, give them a card to present to the priest in the North, saying they are good, practicing Catholics and any kindness shown to them will be appreciated. The migrants like to have these cards with them. A good number of them have come back with different priests' names written on the backs of them.

One of the big difficulties which hurts the work of the Catechist Sisters and hurts my work to a certain extent is that the migrant children in some of the northern dioceses are confirmed at eight or nine years of age, and receive First Communion after two weeks of Doctrine. When they come back they do not know any prayers and they don't come to Doctrina classes because they have already made their First Communion.

One of the largest employers is the California Packing Company. They have very good housing for the workers - individual huts. Last year the workers had to do their own cooking but this year they have a cafeteria and the workers spend about \$1.35 a day for food. I talked to the head of the Company and he told me to come to the camp any time that I wanted to and that he appreciated my asking permission.

The attendance at Mass and at the Rosary was good. We gave out literature, "La Voz", "Revista Catolica" and "Buen Pastor." One of the Women's Clubs collected magazines. One of the women who worked at the doctor's office took a special interest in the braceros.

REV. CHARLES CONATY, O.M.I.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH
NADA, TEXAS

We do not have too many workers here and on Friday afternoons they usually go on to El Campo. Our Catholic lay people encourage these workers to go to Mass and they help in other ways. For instance, one day one of our

St. Mary's Church
Nada, Texas
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good Catholic parishioners brought in a couple and said they were on their way to get a marriage license. The couple said they were going to be married by a Justice of the Peace. Before long we had made arrangements to have them married properly and in a week or so we had a Catholic wedding for this couple.

REV. EDMUND J. BILY
NADA, TEX.